




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOK

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Torres Strait, Marine Infrastructure

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.42 pm): In 2023 the state and federal governments announced an \$80 million investment—a fifty-fifty partnership to upgrade vital marine infrastructure in the Torres Strait. The road to fixing this age-old marine infrastructure in the Torres Strait has not been an easy one for the Torres Strait Island Regional Council—a small, non-rateable council covering a vast region of 15 inhabited islands. As members can imagine, keeping up with the ongoing maintenance costs for marine infrastructure was always going to be a costly task. For TSIRC, the ongoing damages incurred over the years from extensive use and extreme weather conditions weighed heavily on council cost. I was first elected in 2017 and since then I have worked closely with TSIRC over the years to explore options for government support to upgrade marine infrastructure in the Torres Strait. This issue of marine infrastructure is not new for me. Coming from a small island community myself, I am very familiar with the condition of marine infrastructure in my home community of Yam Island. Additionally, I have inspected many other boat ramps and jetties in TSIRC's footprint to get a clear picture and to advocate in the best interests of the community.

The discussions around marine infrastructure have been ongoing, but I really want to take this opportunity today to talk about some of the highlights and key events that this government undertook to reach a positive outcome. In November 2022 the then minister for transport and main roads, Mark Bailey MP, and I met with the Torres Strait Island Regional Council at one of its ordinary meetings to discuss critical marine infrastructure in the region. At this meeting there was a request to match the \$40 million commitment by the federal Albanese government for a marine infrastructure upgrade. In September 2022 community cabinet was held on Thursday Island. During this time the transport minister and the ministerial champion for the Torres Strait, Shannon Fentiman, visited Dauan Island to inspect Dauan Island marine infrastructure. In October 2022 I had the pleasure of visiting Badu Island with Premier Steven Miles and Mayor Phillemon Mosby and took the opportunity to inspect marine infrastructure on Badu Island. We discussed the need for vital investment for infrastructure upgrades to unlock economic opportunities for these communities. I want to acknowledge the work of the current mayor of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Councillor Phillemon Mosby, who advocated fiercely for state and federal government investment to support the upgrade of critical marine infrastructure in the outer islands of the Torres Strait.

In March 2023 the state government held a cost-of-living summit on Thursday Island to hear directly from communities about their lived experience dealing with the everyday cost of living in the region. We acknowledge that the blue highway is an important part of everyday life for locals, supporting social and economic outcomes for these communities. Therefore, marine infrastructure is an essential part to support the lifestyle in many of these communities. It was during this time that the state government in partnership with the federal government announced an \$80 million investment—the largest marine infrastructure investment—to upgrade critical marine infrastructure in the Torres Strait

and northern peninsula area. I want to commend and thank Premier Steven Miles for taking a keen interest to visit Badu Island with me to see for himself the state of the island's only marine infrastructure. We heard directly from locals about its use and also safety concerns they held for its use. We also discussed the economic benefits of a marine infrastructure upgrade and what that would mean for the community. The Premier and I learned that Badu Island hosts a number of cruise ships a year, unlocking opportunities for soft tourism and offering a unique experience to Badu Island people and culture. I am proud of our government's achievements and I am proud to represent the Miles government. We will continue to show up for Queenslanders every day. We are listening and we are delivering.